



J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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March 15, 2006

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL SERVICES FOR GROUPS CONTRACT REVIEW – EARLY
AND PERIODIC SCREENING, DIAGNOSTIC, AND TREATMENT
PROGRAM**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Special Services for Groups (SSG or Agency), a Department of Mental Health Services (DMH) service provider. The Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division conducted this review.

Background

DMH contracts with SSG, a private, non-profit, community-based organization, which provides services to children and their parent(s) countywide. Services include interviewing program participants, assessing their mental health needs, and developing and implementing a treatment plan. Our review focused on the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) program, which is Medi-Cal's comprehensive and preventive child health program for individuals under the age of 21. SSG's EPSDT billable services include Targeted Case Management Services (TCMS), Mental Health Services (MHS), and Medication Support Services. SSG's headquarters is located in the First District.

For our review period, DMH paid SSG between \$1.40 and \$3.33 per minute of staff time (\$84.00 to \$199.80 per hour). For Fiscal Year 2005-06, DMH contracted with SSG to provide approximately \$7.2 million in EPSDT services.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether SSG provided the services outlined in their contract with the County. We also evaluated whether the Agency achieved planned service levels. Our monitoring visit included a review of a sample of SSG's billings, participant charts, and personnel and payroll records. We also interviewed staff from SSG and interviewed a sample of the participants' parents and guardians.

Results of Review

SSG used qualified staff to perform the services billed, and the participants' parents and legal guardians interviewed stated the program services met their expectations.

The Agency did not sufficiently document 780 (22%) of the 3,577 service minutes sampled. For example, SSG billed 425 minutes for TCMS but the progress notes did not describe linkage, consultation, and/or placement services, as required by the County contract. SSG also billed DMH 320 minutes for Mental Health Services but the progress notes did not describe what was attempted and/or accomplished towards the client's goals, as required by the county contract.

We have attached the details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action.

Review of Report

We discussed the results of our review with SSG on March 2, 2006. In their attached response, SSG describes the corrective actions it has taken to address the findings and recommendations contained in the report.

We thank SSG management for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Dr. Marvin J. Southard, Director, Department of Mental Health
Herbert H. Hatanaka, Executive Director, SSG
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING REVIEW
EARLY AND PERIODIC SCREENING, DIAGNOSTIC, AND TREATMENT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2004-2005
SPECIAL SERVICES FOR GROUPS**

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Special Services For Groups (SSG or Agency) provided the services billed in accordance with their contract with Department of Mental Health (DMH).

Verification

We selected 3,577 (1.5%) minutes from 238,939 service minutes that SSG billed DMH for December 2004 and January 2005 and reviewed the progress notes and Client Plans maintained in the clients' charts. The 3,577 minutes represent services provided to 37 program participants as reported by the Agency. Although we started our review in June 2005, the most current billing information available from DMH's billing system was December 2004 and January 2005.

Results

The Agency did not sufficiently document 780 (22%) of the 3,577 service minutes sampled. Specifically, we noted the following:

- For 425 minutes sampled, the Agency billed for Targeted Case Management Services but the progress notes did not describe the type of placement, consultation, and/or linkage.
- For 320 minutes sampled, the Agency billed for Mental Health Services but the progress notes did not describe what the client or service staff attempted and/or accomplished towards the client's goal(s).
- For 35 minutes sampled, the Agency billed for Medication Support Services but did not describe the response to medication, side effects, and the client's compliance with the medication regiment.

In addition, for 10 (27%) of the 37 Client Plans sampled, the Agency's staff did not always establish goals that were observable and/or quantifiable. A Client Plan identifies the treatment planned for the participant and expected outcomes (goals) of the treatment. SSG needs to ensure that staff develops goals that are observable and/or quantifiable to measure the clients progress.

Recommendations**SSG management:**

1. **Maintain sufficient documentation to support its compliance with contract requirements.**
2. **Ensure that staff develop observable and quantifiable Client Plan goals.**

CLIENT VERIFICATION**Objectives**

Determine whether the program participants actually received the services that SSG billed DMH.

Verification

We selected a sample of 10 program participants and interviewed their parent or guardian to confirm that the participants are clients of SSG and that they received the services that the Agency billed DMH.

Results

The parents and guardians interviewed stated that the participants were clients of SSG and were satisfied with the services that the Agency provided to the children.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING LEVELS

The objective of this section is to determine whether the Agency maintained the appropriate staffing ratios for Day Rehabilitation and Day Treatment programs.

We did not perform test work in this section. The Agency does not provide Day Rehabilitation or Day Treatment services to its Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) clients.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether SSG's treatment staff possessed the required qualifications to provide the services.

Verification

We reviewed the personnel files for 38 of 165 SSG treatment staff and reviewed documentation to support their qualifications.

Results

Each staff person possessed the required qualifications to deliver the services billed.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

SERVICE LEVELS**Objective**

Determine whether SSG's reported service levels for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004-05 varied significantly from the service levels identified in the DMH contract.

Verification

We obtained a report of EPSDT billings from DMH for FY 2004-05 and compared it with the Agency's total EPSDT contracted level of service identified in the contract for the same period.

Results

The Agency's actual service levels did not significantly vary from its contracted service levels. The Agency's FY 2004-05 contracted service level was approximately \$4.4 million and the DMH billing system reported approximately \$4.0 million.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.



Herbert K. Hatanaka, DMH
Executive Director

SSG PROGRAMS

Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team
(APAIT)

Asian Pacific Counseling & Treatment
Centers (APCTC)

Asian Pacific Residential Treatment
Program

Benefits Assistance Clients Union
Projects (BAC-UP)

Census Data & Geographic Information
Services (CD&GIS)

Children's Dental & Outreach Project

Coverdell Retirement Savings Project (CRS)

Health In Communities (HIC)

Homeless Outreach Program (HOP)/
Integrated Care System (ICS)

Hunger & Hungry Project

Indochinese Counseling & Treatment
Clinic

Organizational Theory Training
Program (OTTP)

Pacific Asian Alcohol & Drug Program
(PAADP)

PALS for Health (PALS)

Parents Involvement Youth Program
(PIVYP)

Tongan Community Service Center

Waco Boulevard Child Development
Center

AD 2020 Mental Health Program

CONSORIA

Asian and Pacific Islander Mental
Health Alliance

Older Adults Program (OAP)

AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

African American Alcohol and Other
Drug Council (AAAOD)

Greater West Hollywood Food Coalition

14 Asian Pacific American Heritage
Month Committees

Orange County Asian & Pacific
Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA)

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March 9, 2006

J. Tyler McCauley, Auditor-Controller
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 525
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. McCauley,

We are in receipt of the Special Service for Groups EPSDT
Contract Review conducted in June 2005. In the review, there
were two recommendations that our agency would like to respond
to.

1. Maintain sufficient documentation to support its
compliance with contract requirements.

*Since the review, SSG has increased the frequency of
documentation training to enhance documentation skills for all
staff. These trainings have specifically focused on types of
linkages, and the proper documentation of what was attempted and
accomplished during all interactions with clients.*

2. Ensure that staff develops observable and quantifiable
Client Plan goals.

*With the implementation of ongoing documentation trainings, we
have seen a tremendous improvement in the quality and
effectiveness of our documentation. We have involved our medical
director in our continuous quality improvement team to help
reinforce the standards for all staff. We are actively involved in
our local service area QIC meetings, which provide additional
information directly from DMH, which has been tremendously
helpful.*





SSG appreciates having the opportunity to respond to these recommendations, and will continue to not only train staff, but also work closely with DMH to get the most updated information regarding documentation requirements.

We thank the auditors for their time in working with our agency. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (213) 553-1800.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Herb Hatanaka', written in a cursive style.

Herbert K. Hatanaka
Executive Director

Cc: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
David Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Dr. Marvin J. Southard, Director, DMH
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